



Better insights better outcomes

Government
Internal Audit
Agency

Public Sector Equality Duty

2023 – 2024 report

February 2025



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Equality report

The Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) is committed to fairness and promoting equality and diversity in everything we do. We continue to focus on creating a healthy, safe, and inclusive working environment for our people to thrive and feel they belong.

Taking equality considerations into account in our work is an important and integral part of our approach.

In carrying out our functions we are required to have due regard for, and achieve the objectives set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

To ensure transparency, and to assist in the performance of this duty, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public authorities, to publish:

- equality objectives, at least every four years (from 6 April 2012); and
- information to demonstrate their compliance with the public sector equality duty (from 31 January 2012)

The GIAA last published its equality objectives in October 2023. This report sets out how the GIAA complies with its responsibilities under the public sector equality duty (PSED) to promote and monitor equalities. The report also provides aggregated information relating to our employees and a benchmark that enables us to measure progress and identify priority areas for further research and action.

Eliminate discrimination

Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment (DBH)

The GIAA is committed to eliminating any discrimination, bullying, harassment. In 2023 - 2024, we focused energies on scoping out an approach to raise awareness of what DBH is, ensure our employees were able to access and be signposted to the right support, policies, and procedures to achieve a quick and effective resolution, and to feel safe to speak up and raise a concern.

Raising Awareness

During quarter 4, we piloted a training session called 'Behaviours Matter' with the Corporate Services Directorate and the people network chairs.

The sessions were designed to equip people with the knowledge and confidence to call out poor behaviour and challenge DBH in the workplace. The objectives of this training were:

- Describing what constitutes bullying and harassment,
- raising awareness of what good behaviours are,
- raising awareness of our 'speak up routes',
- demonstrating how to deal with bullying and harassment concerns if someone does speak up, exploring the role of the bystander and,
- demonstrating the impact and consequences of poor behaviours, whilst inspiring positive individual and organisational change

An evaluation of the pilot showed an improvement across all questions asked including:

- When asked how confident do you feel to challenge a bully at work, confidence scores increased by 23%
- When asked how confident do you feel to challenge a bully who is your manager, confidence scores increased by 34%
- When asked how confident do you feel to speak up and report an incident of bullying you experienced, confidence scores increased by 33.3%
- Feedback taken from the pilot will be used to shape the final training product ready for agency wide delivery in the summer of 2024.

People networks

We continue to support our wide range of people networks. The following networks operated within the GIAA during 2023 - 2024:

- DAWN – Disability & Wellbeing Network
- Faith Networks
- Flexible Workers Network
- GEM – GIAA Ethnic Minority Network
- GLEAM - GIAA LGBTQ+ Equality and Allies Members' Network
- Green Network – for those wanting to do more for the environment
- Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA)
- Menopause Matters
- SupportNet – a source of support to others.
- Women in GIAA (WIG)

Each network has a dedicated intranet page that is accessible to all colleagues. The networks play an instrumental role in raising awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion issues. They each play an integral part in progressing the Agency's inclusion agenda through providing fellowship, support, and networking opportunities for their members; support members with their career progression and personal development; and identify good practice and opportunities for improvement at GIAA.

The networks also act as a critical friend to the Agency, each contributing to policy development, for example HR policies, operational changes and plans, and training delivery. In addition, the networks are approached when undertaking equality impact assessments, helping to ensure that diverse perspectives are appropriately considered.

Embedding Equality considerations

As part of our duty to ensure that our policies do not lead to unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations, work has been scoped to ensure people in the agency are clear on how to assess the impact of their policies and demonstrate best practice. This work includes looking systemically at ways to encourage prompts to proactively consider equality and bolster accountability of senior leaders. We are also looking at ways to build assurance processes through the Agency's People Committee including the monitoring of completed equality impact assessments.

Gender Pay Gap Report

We are committed to transparent reporting and our gender pay gap is published as part of His Majesty's Treasury's (HMT) Gender Pay Gap Report. The report for 2023-24 will be available later in the year via the HMT website. GIAA will continue to work through the action plan and will continue to address any imbalances to show progression and advance equality of opportunity.

The GIAA is committed to reducing the inequalities faced by people with a protected characteristic by offering opportunities to develop and progress in their roles and careers. In 2023 - 2024 we offered the following:

Mentoring

Catapult is a mentoring scheme led by the Ministry of Justice, which aims to support colleagues from less privileged backgrounds to realise their full potential by helping to build confidence, realise aspirations and aid progression through connections with mentors. GIAA has actively participated within this scheme since 2021. In 2023-24 we have continued to offer this opportunity to both mentors and mentees.

In addition to Catapult, GIAA also offers internal mentoring to anyone who requests it. Mentors are assigned to individuals undertaking apprenticeship schemes and to anyone on our Returners Scheme.

Progression Sponsorship Scheme

In 2022 – 2023, we started to scope out the design of a bespoke Progression Sponsorship scheme with a view to rolling it out later in the year. Taking a data driven approach, we identified an under-representation of ethnic minority employees at grades 7 and above and designed the scheme to help reduce this gap.

In 2023-24 we launched the progression sponsorship scheme and offered it to ethnic minority colleagues who are Grade 6 or below. 11 employees signed up and each were partnered with an SCS grade colleague to begin their sponsorship journeys. Support forums were arranged and offered along the way to facilitate peer to peer learning and encourage networking opportunities.

People being sponsored were encouraged to step outside of their comfort zone and try something challenging such as presenting to large audiences, attending a meeting with the CEO, and delivering webinars to the agency.

Following the completion of the scheme, three people were successful in gaining a promotion whilst others experienced a boost in confidence to apply for their next grade. This is great progress for the agency in tackling the hidden barriers people face, by creating opportunities for our people to develop and progress in their careers. Feedback from participants included:

“It has been helpful to gain insight from someone more experienced, talk through barriers and challenges and gain their perspective. This has helped me to see things from a different perspective, challenge some of my beliefs and think about problems differently.”

“Boosted confidence, given assurance - helped open doors, having a senior person advice was very encouraging.”

Foster good relations

Governance

Diversity and inclusion is governed by our People Committee (a sub-committee of our Executive Committee) that provides strategic direction on all people matters including diversity and inclusion. Our People Committee also acts as a consultative and decision-making forum, inviting views and perspectives from our people networks.

Communication

Our communications platform is widely used by people diversity networks to celebrate occasions and events and raise awareness of issues; providing the opportunity for others to learn about the different communities, cultures, and lived experiences of each other.

GIAA has celebrated/commemorated the following days: Deaf Awareness week, Eid Mubarak, Dementia Action week, Mental Health Awareness week, Windrush day, Autistic Pride day, Carers week, Pride month, Schizophrenia awareness day, World Suicide prevention day, International week of happiness at work, Bi visibility Day, National Inclusion week, Black History Month, World Menopause day, Children's Grief awareness week, Wear it Pink day, Grief awareness week, Happy Hanukkah, World Prematurity day, International Stress awareness week, Interfaith week, Carers Right day, Diwali, International Men's day, Advent, Holocaust Memorial Day, Time to talk day, World Cancer day, LGBT history month, International women's day, Lesbian visibility week, Easter and Ramadan.

Our people

Overall workforce

The data presented here shows GIAA's workforce by protected characteristic as of 31 March 2024.

We had an average of 487 full time equivalent people employed by the GIAA as at the end of March 2024.

Table 1 below shows workforce composition by gender, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation. The data includes positive declarations only and excludes declarations of 'prefer not to say' or where information was not provided or is not held.

Table 1

Total proportion of people who identify as Female across all grades (%)	Total proportion of people who identify as Male across all grades (%)	Total proportion of people who identify as being from an ethnic minority across all grades (%)	Total proportion of people who identify as having a disability across all grades (%)	Total proportion of people who identify as either Lesbian/gay/bi/other across all grades (%)
53	47	21	10	5.1

Diversity data by grade

Tables 2 – 7 below illustrate the diverse make up of our organisation by grade as percentages in relation to the protected characteristics as of 31 March 2024 when we employed 487 full time equivalent people. The data excludes declarations of 'prefer not to say' or where information was not provided or is not held. Please note, there is a table included as Annex 1 which explains the job banding used in the GIAA and some of the acronyms used.

All tables read across from junior grades at Administrative Officer (AO) through to senior staff at Senior Civil Servants (SCS) and the percentage are of the total. For example, of the total number of 16–24-year-olds who work for GIAA, 66.7% of them work at Higher Executive Officer (HEO) grade.

Table 2 demonstrates the proportion of our workforce in each age category within each grade:

Age	AO/EO %	HEO %	SEO %	Grade 7 %	Grade 6 %	SCS %	Total %
16-24	33.3	66.7					100
25-29	28	48	16	8			100
30-34	14.7	35.3	26.5	23.5			100
35-39		22.6	22.6	35.5	19.4		100
40-44		26.4	30.6	23.6	12.5	6.9	100
45-49		9.9	31	31	21.1	7	100
50-54	3.7	18.3	30.5	23.2	13.4	11	100
55-59	2.1	17.5	32	21.6	22.7	4.1	100
60-64	2.6	13.2	40.8	31.6	9.2	2.6	100
65 +	4.8	33.3	38.1	14.3	4.8	4.8	100

Table 3 shows the proportion of our workforce who are male and female within each grade:

Gender	AO/EO %	HEO %	SEO %	Grade 7 %	Grade 6 %	SCS %	Total %
Female	5.9	24.1	33.9	20.1	12	4	100
Male	2.1	17.6	27.7	30.3	16	6.3	100

Table 4 shows the proportion of our workforce from an ethnic minority within each grade:

Ethnic Minority	AO/EO %	HEO %	SEO %	Grade 7 %	Grade 6 %	SCS %	Total %
Ethnic minority	9.7	30.1	31.1	21.4	5.8	1.9	100
Un-declared		23.7	45.8	13.6	10.2	6.8	100
White	3.1	18	28.6	27.7	16.9	5.7	100

Table 5 shows the proportion of our workforce with a disability within each grade:

Disability	AO/EO	HEO	SEO	Grade 7	Grade 6	SCS	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Disabled	3.2	30.6	32.4	16.1	14.5	3.2	100
Not disabled	3.7	19	29.4	27.2	15.4	5.3	100
Un-declared	6.5	22.6	36.6	21.5	7.5	5.4	100

Table 6 shows the proportion of our workforce by sexual orientation within each grade:

Sexual Orientation	AO/EO	HEO	SEO	Grade 7	Grade 6	SCS	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Heterosexual	3.6	20	29.4	27.4	15.3	4.5	100
LGBQ*	15.4	34.6	19.3	11.5	11.5	7.7	100
Un-declared	3.4	23	42	17	8	6.8	100

*GIAA employees are invited to record their sexual orientation as 'heterosexual/straight', 'Gay or Lesbian', 'Bisexual' or 'Other'. The term LGBO refers to employees who report belonging to one of these last 3 groups.

Table 7 shows the proportion of our workforce by religious belief within each grade:

Religion	AO/EO %	HEO %	SEO %	Grade 7 %	Grade 6 %	SCS %	Total %
Agnostic	15	20	14	46		5	100
Atheist/None	3.9	18.5	20.8	24.6	25.4	6.9	100
Christian	3	21.6	29.6	26.6	13.1	6.1	100
Hindu	9.1	27.3	27.3	27.3		9.1	100
Muslim	7.4	22.2	37	26	7.4		100
Other		50	33.3	16.7			100
Sikh	10	20	60	10			100
Undeclared	2.8	21.3	45.4	18.5	9.3	2.8	100

Recruitment

The Agency have sought to continue to attract, retain and develop diverse talent through innovative recruitment strategies, using social media, employee advocacy and targeted candidate packs. Our recruitment practice is inclusive, ensuring adverts are checked for language and include positive statements. All roles are open to reasonable adjustments to support the recruitment process. We highlight our work life balance benefits, including flexible working, in all of our job adverts. We continue to use name-blind job applications.

To expand our pool of applications we place all adverts on government's 'Find a Job' website which links to candidates who are claiming benefits due to a disability. The GIAA also participates in the Disability Confident Scheme which enables us to ensure all candidates who apply under this scheme and meet the minimum requirements of the role they have applied for are offered an interview.

All members of recruitment panels are required to complete Civil Service Expectations training. Interview panels consist of three people and are as diverse as possible, with mixed gender being a minimum requirement.

We apply an inclusive induction approach with built-in regular check-in points with new starters to promote networking and encourage feelings of belonging.

Returners Programme

In February 2024, GIAA launched another programme for people returning to the workplace following a career break of at least 18 months. We offered these returners a six-month opportunity to experience internal audit within the Agency and offered additional support with the practical and the psychological challenges of returning to work after a long break. Two people joined the programme on 23 April 2024 and their progress will be reviewed and consideration given to whether we offer permanent roles. If the candidates are not able to stay at GIAA permanently, then they will have built new skills and audit experience which they can include on their CVs to assist with future employment.

Learning, development, skills, and apprenticeships

GIAA is committed to developing a strong learning and development culture and people are at the centre of our values.

The Civil Service apprenticeship strategy is just one of several steps the government has taken to grow the number of apprenticeship opportunities offered in the UK. The GIAA offers apprenticeships up to and including level 6 graduate and level 7 postgraduate.

During 2023 – 2024, approximately 9% of our workforce were undertaking apprenticeships, exceeding the government's commitment for 5% of the civil service's headcount to be apprentices by 2025. The government's strategy also includes a diversity and inclusion measure: the proportion of apprentices

from lower socio-economic backgrounds should remain at or above the Social Mobility Commission benchmark. However, the GIAA does not currently hold data on this recently introduced measure.

The Agency applied for the apprenticeship ‘Investors in People’ award and received the Gold level of accreditation. The assessors concluded that the commitment, investment and embedding of the apprenticeship programme in GIAA as a key business strategy to achieve its goals has resulted in a high-quality apprenticeship programme which provides people with career building opportunities and contributes to the goals of the Agency.

Coach and Focus

GIAA reviewed its performance policy and process during 2023. The outcome of this review was to design and deliver a new approach. In April 2023 the new approach Coach and Focus was launched.

Coach and Focus provides a performance management structure to support and develop all our people whilst building better connections between managers and their staff. Through the embedment of this process, it has cultivated a culture of coaching style conversations, so the conversation becomes learning itself and improves user experience by prioritising people over process.

Coaching Group

To complement and support our new performance management approach, we have a group of 15 fully qualified coaches who offer both one to one coaching to any individual who requests it, and team coaching for managers and their employees. The coaching group has members from all grades, roles and teams to reflect the diversity of the agency.

Health and wellbeing

GIAA is committed to supporting our people’s wellbeing – physical, mental and financial - and aims to deliver this priority by:

- Promoting the range of wellbeing support in different ways to maximise take-up;
- Developing and trialling new and innovative wellbeing tools, recognising that we access and use support in different ways;
- Promoting healthy lifestyles;
- Continually improving the GIAA wellbeing offering;
- Developing GIAA wellbeing and mental health strategies and action plans (aligned with Civil Service wellbeing priorities);
- Early intervention for the prevention and management of musculoskeletal disorders; and
- Continuing to meet quarterly with our Trade Unions representatives.

Supporting mental and physical health

We operate a hybrid working approach which allows colleagues the flexibility of some home working alongside attending an office location.

We also ensure colleagues who require workplace adjustments are fully supported and equipment is provided if required.

All our people have access to our Mental Health and Wellbeing pages which provide a one stop shop for practical advice and support.

All our people across the agency have access to an Employee Assistant Programme (EAP). The EAP offers a complete support network of expert advice and compassionate guidance 24 hours per day, seven days a week, covering a wide range of issues which include:

- Life support: access to counselling for emotional problems and a pathway to structured therapy sessions at your convenience;
- Legal information: for issues that cause anxiety or distress including debt management, consumer, property, or neighbour disputes;
- Bereavement support: the offer of qualified and experienced counsellors who can help with grief plus legal advisors to help with related legal matters;
- Medical information: qualified nurses are on hand to offer support on a range of medical or health-related issues offering practical information and advice; and
- Online cognitive behavioural therapy.

All our people have access to an occupational health service provided by Medigold, Health Management Ltd (HML). They are there to provide line managers with medical advice and recommendations regarding their employees' health and/or disability and how this relates to their work. HML can help with cases that could otherwise result in sickness absence or to help facilitate a return to work following long term sickness absence. They can also advise on a range of other issues such as stress, attendance management and specialist workstation assessments.

All our people have access to the Department for Work and Pension's Access to Work Mental Health services programme, which is delivered by Able Futures. Able Futures can provide nine months confidential, no cost advice, guidance, and support from mental health professionals to help people cope with work while they manage a mental health condition such as anxiety, depression, or stress.

We also have a cohort of employees who are fully qualified Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA). They are a point of contact for anyone at GIAA who is experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. This interaction could range from having an initial conversation through to supporting the person to get appropriate help, including in an emergency situation. Our MHFAs also promote mental health awareness, with blogs and webinars, supporting key awareness days/weeks in the wellbeing calendar.

We encourage all our people to engage with the charity Mind and take part in their Workplace Wellbeing Index survey. Taking part allows employees to provide feedback about mental health in the workplace

providing the opportunity to have their voice heard. Mind then provide GIAA with detailed analysis to help us improve mental health in the workplace.

Annex 1

Grade structure

There are nine pay grades within the GIAA that follow the grade structure used across the civil service. The different grades are shown in the table 8 below:

Table 8

GIAA Grade	
AO	Administrative Officer
EO	Executive Officer
HEO	Higher Executive Officer
SEO	Senior Executive Officer
Grade 7	Grade 7
Grade 6	Grade 6

GIAA Grade	
SCS 1	Deputy Director
SCS 2	Director
SCS 3	Director General